REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1. Examiner rejected Claims 12 and 13 under 35 USC 112, para. 2, as being indefinite. Claims 12 and 13 are amended, herein, (renumbered 10 and 11) to remove the "insufficient antecedent basis" as helpfully suggested by Examiner. Claim 1 as amended herein now cites "a layer of one or more softer grip materials" providing sufficient antecedent basis for Claims 12 and 13 (amended 10 and 11).

2. Examiner rejected Claims 1-2 and 5-6 under 35 USC 102(b) over Turner '473.

Applicant acknowledges Turner in both 5,575,473 and 5,855,525 which describe a rigid high modulus vibration transmission path from the shaft to his unitary (one element) high modulus grip. Unitary metal or rigid grips are not unique to Turner (see Jackel '644, Buchanan '027, and many others prior). The present invention differs from Turner '473 and '525 and the prior art in several substantial ways:

a. Turner's rigid single element unitary grip transmits and enhances all vibrations, good and bad, both initial (at impact) and sustained, to the golfer's hands. Tortional vibrations (from toe or heel miss hits), transverse vibrations (normal to the club to target line), and sustained longer duration vibrations are all undesirable vibrations which confuse and diminish the impact feedback a golfer needs to control ball travel distance based on impact feel. Turner attempts to transmit and feel all low frequency vibrations, good and bad, to assist the golfer in making a "correct strike" near the "sweet spot" (Col. 3, Lines 45-48).

b. Unlike Turner '473 and '525, the subject invention uses two or more rigid elements (not one like Turner) surrounded by vibration absorbing elastomer (per Claims 1-3, now combined in amended Claim 1), unlike Turner, and thus only transmits desirable impact vibrations (i.e. those in the target line plane) while dampening and insulating the golfer's hands from the undesirable vibrations previously described (unlike Turner).

c. Turner '473, remarkably like Sears '743 preceding him, requires one or more amplification cavities between shaft and grip. Rohrer uses no such cavities in Claims 1, 2, 5 or 6. Rohrer original Claim 18 (now numbered as Claim 16 in amended Claims) does use a grip of the present invention with multiple selectively placed rigid elements surrounded by said softer grip materials (unlike Turner), premounted on a rigid tube which is slipped over the shaft and rigidly connected at one location (unlike Turner's two locations) or two location points. The connection points, however, are

chosen based on maximum shaft vibration amplitude not to create sound cavities per Turner. The connections can be open with holes or spokes vs Turner's solid "collars" because the present invention (unlike Turner '473) does not require one or more enclosed cavities.

d. Turner '473 and '525 grip bodies are totally or primarily comprised of High Modulus material. The grip bodies of the present invention are primarily low modulus elastomeric materials like conventional grips. In those embodiments where Turner's grips have a "thin cover" of elastomer (Col. 5, Lines 61-67), the covering is of "uniform thickness" and reduces performance (Col. 5, Lines 57-60).

e. Turner's '473 and '525 bodies are of one (high modulus) material or of multiple "similar" (high modulus) materials. Grips of the present invention use two or more materials of very different modulus (at least one high and one low).

Claims 5 and 6 (renumbered 3 and 4 in the amended Claims herein) are dependent Claims on the generic amended Claim 1 relating to the hardness (high modulus) and shape, respectively, of the elements of the present invention. These elements differ in shape, location, and number (two or more) from the single unitary element of Turner '473 and '525.

3. Examiner rejected Claims 1-3, 5-6, 9-10 and 13 under 35 USC 102(b) over Downey '665.

Downey '665 describes a golf club grip with a single molded rubber "inner socket" with a rubber "outer jacket" molded about it. The rubber "inner socket" and rubber "outer jacket" differ in stiffness and/or color. The inner socket is stiffer to allow improved transmission of tortional forces (higher tortional rigidity and stability) while the softer "outer jacket" retains the desirable higher coefficient of friction of soft grip surfaces. Downey '665, therefore, has a totally different object (tortional rigidity with soft surface for full swing clubs) vs the present invention (improved selective impact vibration transmission with putters and other partial swing clubs). Downey never describes or claims enhanced vibration transmission and his elastomeric "projecting protrusions" are not "rigid vibration transmitting elements" per the present invention.

The present invention means also differ from Downey '665 in numerous ways:

a. While Downey's single unitary inner socket may be stiffer than his outer jacket covering, both are rubber or other relatively soft vibration absorbing elastomers. If the inner socket were not an elastomer, it would not allow conventional "slip-on" installation of the grip, and it would transmit too much harsh impact vibration from full

swing impacts. The present invention uses multiple "hard or rigid vibration transmitting elements" (i.e., metal, ceramic, or hard plastic) surrounded by (not covered by) a vibration absorbing elastomeric layer.

b. Downey's unitary inner socket has a "plurality of radially projecting protrusions" distributed uniformly around the grip circumference. The present invention has multiple independent (detached) hard or rigid vibration transmitting elements selectively positioned to only transmit desirable (i.e., target line oriented) initial impact vibrations to a golfer's hands.

c. Downey's inner unitary elastomer socket and outer elastomer jacket are both molded and fully bonded or "cross-linked" to each other. The multiple independent rigid elements of the present invention need not be molded and need not be attached to the surrounding elastomer grip material.

d. Downey's "outer jacket" covers the entire unitary inner socket with little or no contact with the clubshaft. The majority of the clubshaft grip length contacts the grip elastomeric material (through an adhesive layer) with the present invention.

e. If Downey's unitary inner socket were of metal or other rigid material, it would not allow selective placement of individual vibration transmitting elements surrounded by energy absorbing elastomer allowing selective transmission of desirable impact vibration while absorbing or insulating undesirable vibrations per the present invention.

4. Claim 12 (now amended Claim 10) is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Downey in view of Kobayaski.

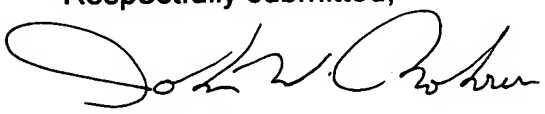
Kobayaski '939 like Downey, uses a unitary inner layer completely covered with a detachable outer layer (unlike Downey). Because the inner layer is unitary, like Downey's, even if it were rigid (it is not) and projected through the outer layer (it does not), it would not be able to selectively transmit desirable impact vibrations while at the same time absorb or insulate undesirable vibrations per the present invention.

Downey in view of Kobayaski, therefore, differs substantially in both object and means for the same reasons cited in paragraph 3 above.

Conclusion

In view of the above amended Claims and Remarks, it is submitted that the Claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the objections and rejections is requested. Allowance of amended Claims 1-17 is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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